

Minutes – February 26, 2015
Cornell University Student Assembly
4:45pm – 6:30pm

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

S. Balik called to order at 4:48pm.

Members present: S. Ali Khan, B. Bacharach, s. Balik, J. Batista, Y. Bhandari, M. Chak, M. Henderson, e. Johnston, G. Kaufman, D. Li, E. Liu, L. Liu, P. Titcomb, D. Vakili, F. Yang

Members tardy: J. Fridman, M. Stefanko, S. Tayal

Members excused: B. Brown, L. Goldman, M. LaPointe, M. Masson, J. Selig, B. Sullivan, A. Zhou

Members unexcused: L. Wershaw

II. Open Microphone

None

III. Approval of the February 12, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Minutes approved by unanimous consent

IV. Provost Search Committee – Alan Mathios and John Siliciano

Usually it's an internal candidate that takes the place of the provost, but the new President wanted to do a full blown search this year.

In many ways, the Provost is the chief academic officer of the university. He/She allocates resources to colleges (and therefore faculty and students) and sets the budgets for the colleges and student services (dorms, dining halls, etc.)

They are at the SA meeting to ask what characteristics they would like to see in the new Provost. The hope is to announce the new Provost in the Fall.

M. Battaglia stated that students would appreciate a Provost with not only good, but great at financial management in order to minimize increased costs for students.

G. Kaufman asked how they plan on ensuring the new Provost continues the model of academic excellence. Response: That is one of the first things on their list of requirements, and what they are looking for are candidates that have experiences and demonstrated such academic excellence in the past.

L. Liu stated that a large part of Cornell's prestige comes from the fact that it's a research institution, and the new Provost should be aware of that and also be able to maintain communication with the satellite campuses.

J. Fridman mentioned that a characteristic that students would greatly value is accessibility, especially as the tuition money students pay are being used to make decisions around campus.

F. Yang, D. Vakili, and M. Chak stressed the importance of inclusion, of the different colleges, and of individuals.

V. Announcements and Reports

Breaking Biases Panel – M. Chak

There will be at least 10 administrators that will be present, and it is encouraged for SA members to volunteer and/or facilitate.

Elections Announcement – K. Aniket

Candidate registration has been extended to 3/2 at noon.

VI. Business of the Day

R.43: Addressing Cissexism – S. Tayal and P. Titcomb

Call to question, seconded, approved by a vote of 18-0-0 (SA vote: 16-0-0, Community vote: 5-0-1 contributes 2-0-1)

VII. New Business

R.46: Opposing the Health Fee – S. Ali Khan, Y. Bhandari and E. Johnston

Motion to amend: Line 13 to read: “Health Fee; these meetings were to support administration’s communication of the fee to students and did not pertain to whether or not the fee was beneficial or detrimental to students’.

Call to question on the amendment, seconded, approved by a vote of 16-0-0.

E. Liu asked where the students on the Student Health Fee Advisory Committee would come from. Response: Rather than work out logistics at the meeting, they trust that the pool of students initially requested for advice would be the same pool that the committee members would be chosen from.

M. Stefanko mentioned his discomfort with the Advisory Committee clause, as it weakens the cause by admitting that the health fee might be passed. Response: While that is true, they believe it’s work the risk to leave the clause in so that they have institutionalized student voices in how the fee is being used.

S. Tayal mentioned that while the idea of the health fee advisory committee is very good, a better idea might be to form a committee to handle other similar kinds of issues so that there isn’t a precedent set for creating committees post-decision to try and adjust it after the fact.

J. Fridman mentioned that if this resolution seeks to address the problems that came up, it should also include how Student Assembly was asked to lie about their knowledge of the health fee.

C. Cheng cautioned against appending a verbatim record of the notes taken at the forum, as going into a discussion with the administration with angry demands probably isn’t the best way to go. Response: Vice President Susan Murphy was there during the forum, so she is aware of what is happening. With so many students willing to voice their opinions, they shouldn’t be censored in any way.

M. Stefanko stated that this resolution should just oppose the fee (and not have a clause about the advisory committee) and other resolutions be created to address the other issues.

Call to question on the amendment, approved, dissent expressed, amendment fails by a vote of 2-14-0.

Motion to table until next week, seconded, dissent expressed, motion withdrawn at the discretion of the chair.

Similar discussion continued and the sponsors requested that anyone that wanted to contribute to the resolution contact them before the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Chelsea Cheng